

today who represent the strong partnership in disaster response between the Red Cross and AmeriCorps, our national service program. Johnny Jones and Beverly Beyer were trained by you, the Red Cross. They've worked side by side with the Red Cross when disaster struck in Idaho during fires and Houston after the flood. I'm proud of them and the spirit of voluntarism they represent. I'd like them to raise their hands and be recognized. There they are. Thank you very much. *[Applause]*

Now I have to do what Elizabeth sent me here to do, the sales pitch. *[Laughter]* Because the truth is that for all the work the Red Cross does, none of it can happen without the generous support of the American people, without the million and a half volunteers, the millions of financial contributors, and yes, the blood donors.

So I urge all Americans to keep up your support, to give your time, to give your money, to give your blood, because, as the saying is this year, "Help Can't Wait." I hope the American people will continue to live out the ideals of the Red Cross and be good neighbors every day.

Thank you very much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:26 a.m. on the lawn at Red Cross headquarters. Following his remarks and a tour of displays, he signed the American Red Cross Month proclamation.

Proclamation 6772—American Red Cross Month, 1995

February 27, 1995

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Every day, thousands of people in need look to the American Red Cross as a banner of hope. For disaster victims here and abroad, for service men and women seeking assistance, and for everyone depending on a safe and ready supply of blood—the Red Cross stands prepared to respond. But the scope of its service extends well beyond the provision of emergency care. Its broader mission is clear: to promote compassion, to fos-

ter a spirit of generosity, and to improve the human condition everywhere.

Since Clara Barton—"The Angel of the Battlefield"—founded the American Association of the Red Cross in 1881, its members have been called upon to serve in war and in peace. Today, with more than 1 million dedicated and experienced volunteers, the American Red Cross plays a vital role in bringing physical and emotional comfort to those who need it most. Whether they are responding to an emergency or addressing the daily necessities of the homeless and elderly, Red Cross workers have always been models of community spirit.

Dangers to the health and safety of our people have changed radically during the past hundred years, and the Red Cross has adapted to meet these needs. Its commitment to caring for others enables us to restore hope in the lives of injured citizens, and its example challenges us to revitalize the covenant of American citizenship. The long-term strength of our Nation depends upon our willingness to live out the ideals long embodied by the American Red Cross. To celebrate our past and to safeguard our future, I am proud to commend the countless individuals whose courage and selflessness have sustained this organization for more than a century.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America and Honorary Chairman of the American Red Cross, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 1995 as "American Red Cross Month." I urge all Americans to show support for the more than 2,000 Red Cross chapters nationwide, and I challenge each of you to become active participants in advancing the noble mission of the Red Cross.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-seventh day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and nineteenth.

William Jefferson Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:17 a.m., February 28, 1995]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 2.

Remarks Commemorating the First Anniversary of the Brady Law and an Exchange With Reporters

February 28, 1995

The President. Thank you very much. Mr. Vice President, Mr. Secretary, Madam Attorney General, Commissioner Lovitt, and my friend Jim, congratulations. Happy anniversary.

You know, I'd like to begin by saying a special word about Jim Brady. He dedicated his life to public service. In no small measure because of that dedication, 14 years ago his life was in danger and his life changed forever. In spite of all the hardship and the pain that followed, he never looked back but instead decided he should fight on, determined to do his part to prevent the tragedy that struck him from striking other people. More than any other person in the United States, we celebrate today the courage and determination of Jim Brady, and we are in his debt.

Thank you, sir.

James Brady. Thank you, sir.

The President. You know, Jim and Sarah Brady represent in so many ways the kind of citizen action I talked about in the State of the Union Address, the New Covenant: moral responsibility along with more opportunity and people sparking grassroots movements across this country. I am committed to this law and committed to what it represents. You know, our big problems here in Washington often stem from the fact that we don't think about what promotes responsibility and what creates opportunity and what enables people to make the most of their own lives. The Brady bill does all that.

A crucial part of our job here in Washington is to help arm the American people, through our police officers, to fight crime and violence. The Brady law, in that sense, is one of the things that I'm proudest of that has happened since I have been President. We put an end to 7 years of politics-as-usual, of people saying one thing and doing another, when the Brady law passed. It's not a com-

plex piece of legislation, but it took 7 years, 7 years to pass the Congress.

And all the naysayers talked about how terrible it would be. Well, now we know that, as the Secretary said, over 40,000 convicted felons, fugitives, drug dealers, gang members, stalkers, were prevented from purchasing handguns in the Brady law's first 11 months. I should point out that the real national number is bigger than that because, as you know, there are some States that have companion laws that go along with that, and the estimates are that, nationwide in the States with Brady-like laws and the Brady law, the total is more like 70,000.

A recent study says that, as the Secretary said, that that's only 3.5 percent of all the people who buy handguns. And as he said, it's kind of like airport metal detectors. I think 97 percent of us should be willing to wait a while, so that the 3 percent of us who are trying to buy guns for the wrong reasons can be stopped. Three percent of the American people buying guns for the wrong reasons can do a phenomenal amount of damage, and stopping them can do a phenomenal amount of good, can keep a lot of citizens alive, and it can keep an awful lot of law enforcement officials alive.

There are thousands of examples around the country, but let me just cite one or two. In March of 1994, the Brady law stopped a handgun purchase by a man in Kansas under a restraining order for allegedly stalking his wife and threatening to kill her. In April, the law led to the arrest of a suspected drug dealer in Texas with outstanding warrants for possession of cocaine and heroin with intent to distribute. In November, it helped to catch two gang members, both convicted felons, who traveled all the way from California to Nevada to purchase weapons.

These are the people the law was meant to stop. Law-abiding people are those the law was meant to protect. The test was simple: Will it save a life? Will it protect one child walking home from school, so he or she could feel a little safer? Will it spare one woman from abuse? If it could, we all thought the law would be a success. Now we know that it has done that thousands of times over in